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MEMO FOR RECORD CONCERNING HISTORIES 20 June 1966

1. Why Histories?

The DD/P, with considerable foresight, has initiated a comprehensive program for writing histories of the various components of the Clandestine Services and their respective operations and activities. This program has been under way for a year and a half, and historical contributions of interest and value are being received at a gratifying rate.

Historical programs are equally important for the other Directorates. They should produce systematic records of their organizations, operations, activities, procedures, successes and failures; of the concepts leading to the formation of their various components, policy decisions laid down for their guidance, and the various authorities and agreements under which they have conducted their activities. Such a systematic record of the past is basic to enlightened planning for the future.

2. Who will use them?

Historical papers will provide:

a. A documented record of previous programs, activities, and experiences (together with appropriate conclusions) as background for those engaged in operational, organizational and policy planning.

b. A helpful summary for the orientation of new office, division, or branch chiefs and other key officers.

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c. A ready backstop for senior officers in testing their opinions and judgments of new demands and changing programs.

d. An historical frame of reference for initiating new activities and resolving difficult problems.

e. A source of background material as required by senior Agency management.

f. An aid to training.

g. Contributions to "Studies in Intelligence."

3. How Will the Historical Program be Organized?

a. Historical Staff

The Historical Staff is part of the Office of the Director of Central Intelligence. A project has been approved for this staff providing a minimum of personnel to encourage and assist in historical programs for the DD/I, DD/S&T, and DD/S. The Project Manager will be responsible for organizing these programs and to this end will work closely with the Historical Boards and Historical Officers proposed below.

b. Historical Boards

Historical Boards should be established under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Directors for Intelligence, Science and Technology, and Support to set the terms of reference for the several historical programs, determine what histories are to be written, and provide continuing guidance and review in the preparation of histories.

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c. Historical Officers

Each major component of the three directorates should designate a senior officer as Historical Officer who will be responsible for coordinating historical matters within his component and will be the point of contact for the Project Manager.

4. Who will write the Histories?

In general it would be impractical to ask staff officers to write lengthy chronological histories of major components in addition to their other duties. However, they could well be assigned to writing short monographs or special papers on subjects with which they are intimately acquainted. The problem of long histories can be attacked in two other ways.

a. Each major component in a Deputy Directorate should identify capable staff employees who intend to retire within 6 - 12 months (this should be projected over a four year period). In many cases such staff employees can be relieved of regular duties and assigned to writing historical papers.

b. Each major component could contract with annuitants to write historical papers - whereas ceilings are tight, there are usually sufficient funds for such a purpose, although the number of contracts should be held to a minimum.

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5. What Should be Included in the Histories?

A history should state not only what was done, but how and why it was done. Normally the various facets of subject matter should be woven into a chronological narrative.

Using evidence in context, honest conclusions can be drawn regarding the extent of success and failure and the reasons therefor. But the factual narrative should not be interlarded with editorializing, and personal opinion should not be substituted for objective exposition.

Every writer has to use his own style, but unity in writing, a singleness of effect, and a well-proportioned product are promoted by outlining in advance and by keeping the presentation chronological. Good judgment is required as to the relative importance of material and corresponding emphases in presentation.

Some of the topics that should be included in an historical paper are:

a. Mission: How was the initial mission or function of a component determined? What changes have there been over the years? Were these changes due to experience, policy guidance, changing world conditions, addition of new functions? Under what authorities and agreements was the initial mission assigned and what authorities and agreements controlled later change and redirection of effort.

b. Organization: Original organization. Changes in organizational structure: due to experience, increased requirements, change in scope of mission, budgetary or manpower limitations?

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c. Relationships: with other agency components, USIB agencies, other government departments and agencies, foreign governments, etc.

d. Problems & Methods: Over the years what problems have arisen and what methods have been used to resolve them? How was administration and management improved, or what new methods were adopted to cope with broadening activities and increasing work load?

In addition to the narrative chronological history many components will produce monographs dealing with special activities or operations, committees they have chaired or on which they have been represented, etc. Monographs are suggested so that the logical flow of the narrative will not be interrupted by lengthy dissertations on specific, and often unusual activities.

Documents may often provide insufficient material. If so, it will be necessary to debrief knowledgeable individuals.

6. What Classification and Dissemination?

Each major component will determine the classification of its own historical papers. When possible, classification should be no higher than secret.

One copy of each historical paper will be deposited in the office of the appropriate Deputy Director and included in the catalog of the Deputy Director's histories. The master copy will be retained in the office of origin. Any further dissemination will be determined by the office of origin.

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